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Possibility of Major Soviet Move on Germany

Within the past two or three days Soviet Ambassadors and high officials have left their posts suddenly to return to Moscow.

- Vishinsky - UN - left New York 3 June; trip to Moscow gave impression of urgency - left Berlin at night shortly after arrival; usual custom is to stop over night and fly to Moscow by daylight.
- On 30 June Malik (UK) and Zarubin (US) left for Moscow rather suddenly.
- Press reports state that on or immediately prior to 30 June, over 20 high-ranking Soviet officials in East Germany were recalled to Moscow; High Commissioner Semenov believed among them.
- On 1 July, Pavlov (France) paid a farewell call on President Auriol and was reportedly scheduled to leave "today or tomorrow".
- The newly-appointed Soviet Ambassador to Poland, G. M. Popov, has not yet arrived in Warsaw.

Soviet light-bomber units are being withdrawn from the 24th Air Army in East Germany, up to 116 aircraft believed to be involved.

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- On 30 June, Wermenchken airfield, a base for 60 of the 126 IL-28's in the Soviet Zone was reported vacated,

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DISCUSSION:

The sudden and coincident presence in Moscow of the Soviet Ambassadors to U.S., UK, and France, together with Ambassadors from Turkey, Iran, Burma, the Charge from Greece (no Ambassador) and Vishinsky appears to be more than the summer vacation, sick wife cover stories will sustain. The recall to Moscow at the same time of 20 or more high Soviet officials, possibly including Semenov, is additionally curious and may indicate that Germany is the topic of discussion. In this connection, Beria's absence on 27 June from the Bolshoi Theater might be explained by his desire for a first-hand look at the German situation preparatory to these discussions-- there is no evidence to sustain this hypothesis, but it is not wholly unreasonable; Beria is known to have been concerned with German problems prior to 1950.

Soviet aircraft have flown in numbers from the Soviet Zone back to the USSR before, notably in October 1951 when over 300 Migs left in the space of two weeks. It is a different matter when a large number of planes leave under such circumstances as those present in Germany now, particularly when German forces have recently demonstrated their ineffectiveness.

The USSR may be preparing a major step on Germany - an offer of free elections and unification if neutralized, a proposal for new four-power talks on Germany, or, [REDACTED] a unilateral withdrawal of forces.

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This last possibility would place Western powers in a highly embarrassing position, wreck Adenauer's chances in the September elections, induce France, out of fear of united Germany, to revive the Treaty of Friendship with the USSR and, thus, pretty effectively ruin all prospects for EDC.